

## **Response by Ceramics, Glass and Metals Department to Peer Review Group Report**

We would like to thank the Peer Review Group (PRG) for the commitment and care they have taken in evaluating our department. We would also like to express our gratitude to Nicky Saunders, Quality Assurance Officer, for guiding our department and the PRG through the various stages of this ongoing process. Our colleagues in Core Studies and Mick Wilson, Head of Research and Postgraduate Development, also made a valuable contribution in helping us assess our academic practice.

The quality assurance/quality improvement system is welcomed by staff and students in the Ceramics, Glass and Metals Department (CGM). The procedure helped us to clearly define areas of strength and weakness within the department. A number of significant issues were identified by the department through an extensive strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis. These issues were endorsed by the PRG who also highlighted some additional elements for us to revisit as part of our quality improvement plan (QuIP).

Not all of the problems recognised in the PRG report are easily rectified. In many instances we require upgraded facilities and significant financial investment to make the necessary change. The area of new technology, postgraduate research and recruitment are directly affected by such issues. However, we are not working in isolation. The NCAD is working towards dynamic postgraduate transformation with initiatives such as the National Digital Research Centre.

In response to the PRG report, the following key issues were identified by the staff as the areas requiring immediate attention where we do have control:

- Redefine our course philosophy in a time of tremendous technical change
- Restructure our 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> year courses in line with the implementation of modularisation at NCAD
- Forge stronger links with Core Studies to enable sustained quality recruitment
- Change the name of the CGM department to more clearly describe what we do

Other issues, such as improved communication throughout the faculty and college are addressed on a consistent basis by all academic and administrative staff throughout the college.

We are undeviating in our commitment to improving the academic content of our curriculum. Creating a meaningful learning experience is central to our departmental vision. This involves in-house projects, as well as 'live' projects for industry and organisations outside of the NCAD. Although, our primary role is as

educators, we will where possible continue to find sources of investment to fund academic research and facilitate technology. Creating opportunities for design industry work experience through our 'knowledge transfer partnership' scheme is a good example of this ideal.

This brief response to the PRG report and the report itself will now be published on the NCAD website. The transparent nature of the CGM Department evaluation by academic and technical staff, in consultation with the PRG, is welcomed as a vital mechanism for sustained improvement. The fact that much of the critical analysis underlined in the PRG report was generated by the department before the PRG visit in November 2005 is reassuring. Therefore, we are not apprehensive that apparent departmental weaknesses are now open to public view through the internet. This we see as essential. The QulP stage is now well underway and we are making the necessary practical changes to ensure that our department continues to flourish.

Derek Mc Garry

*Acting Head, CGM Department*  
*1<sup>st</sup> February 2006*